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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND ITS OPPONENTS.

There never has been a movement which had for its aim the amelioration of the conditions to which mankind has been subjected, but that, if the movement succeeded in part, there was always a counter movement. Especially is this so with regard to our national and international labor unions. Out of all the past efforts to combine the workingmen of this country there was evolved the American Federation of Labor, and in its sphere it has held almost undisputed sway for many years. It has not held this position for any sentimental reasons, but only from the fact that its form of organization and its accomplishments have demonstrated that its policies were calculated to achieve tangible results for the laboring people. For reasons which can be easily explained there is always a possibility that the toilers can be misguided, and suffer bitter experience when carried away with some sentimental theory. The labor union, of the present day must meet the commercial conditions with cold-blooded business methods. It is not to be understood that fraternalism is to be entirely eliminated from our organizations, for such would be impossible, but there is often apt to be applied sentimentalism to subjects which require being dealt with in a logical business way. The selling of our labor for the highest market price is purely a commercial transaction, and should be based entirely upon substantial grounds, having regard for our ability to successfully gain the same, as well as preparing logical reasons why we should be accorded that which we desire. Conditions, to a large extent govern the price to be paid for all kinds of labor, but it must not be forgotten that it frequently occurs that it is possible for union men to veer conditions in such a manner as to make it comparatively easy to increase the price of labor. Intelligent preparation and action is the most valuable asset that any union can possess. In fact it is the motive power of all organizations. This is acutely demonstrated in the highly skilled unions, or among that class of men who, from the very character of their work, are compelled to use in a greater or less degree, their mental faculties in the performance of their daily work. It is a misguided notion that any new plan evolved can change instantly the industrial conditions now in vogue, but there seems to be some only thing necessary to do is to make certain changes in our form of organizations, and then the entire few individuals who assume that the labor and trades union problems will solve themselves. This idea entirely disregards the natural predilections of mankind, it forgets the natural instincts and inclinations that are the very embodiment of man, and erroneously presumes that all men can be influenced by a certain form of organization to think alike. Even if this were true it would have but a sad and serious conclusion, for if all men could think alike who have to toil no diversion could come to the human mind. It is constant change that is demanded by all forms of life, and in cementing men together for a certain purpose it is absolutely necessary that we follow lines that appeal to the general instincts of human beings. Machinery, if properly constructed, will perform its monotonous work with

never ceasing diligence, and regularity, but the machinery of humanity must be allowed to follow the channels which inspire it and beckon it onward. No hard and fast lines can be adopted to successfully guide the ideas of the individual, except the most basic, and then provision must be made for slight divergences. Let the individual have as much latitude as it is possible if it is desired to accomplish the best results, and institute no plan whereby the law of force becomes the dominant factor.

RESULT OF EFFORT IN LAST CAMPAIGN.

The results attending the effort of the American Federation of Labor in its campaign to defeat, in the last election, those congressmen who were either negligent, hostile or indifferent to the welfare of organized labor, have been cumulative.

Unfortunately many union men can see no beneficial effect of a negative campaign, but rely solely upon the theory that it is necessary for a political party to exist, made up entirely of unionists to accomplish any favorable legislation in the various legislative bodies of the state and nation. While many attempts have been made to organize such political combinations no great success has been achieved, primarily from the fact that union men do not combine in sufficient strength to make an affirmative campaign effective. The trade union, however, does not assume to take any part in any political program as unions, and where political questions have been made prominent features of any organization, weakness and ineffectiveness of the union always follows in its wake. This can be explained from the fact that the province of the trades union is based solely and explicitly upon three definite things, namely, wages, hours and conditions of employment. And when any other subjects are taken up by the trade union there is wide latitude for differences of opinion, and frequently these differences become so great that harmony is destroyed in the organization to the detriment of the main objects of unionism. It is not contended that union men as individuals should refrain from taking an active part in the solution of all public questions, but as representative citizens should consider it their duty to assume a lively interest in all questions of a public nature, and align themselves upon the side which they believe will make for the good of their fellow union men. But when any union assumes that it has the right to dictate to its members on political questions it is presumptions in the extreme, and is extending its force and power beyond legitimate lines. It is likewise repugnant to those members of unions who are striving to decide for themselves by study the best course to pursue in resisting or advocating any public measure.

There is one important question which the ordinary "politico-economist" entirely loses sight of. That is, were it possible to combine all union men upon some one political platform, the greatest numerical strength we could hope for would be somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000,000. This would be entirely inadequate to force recognition as a dominant political factor. In the next presidential election there will be cast, in all probability, nearly 18,000,000 votes. Deduct the 3,000,000 referred to above, and there is still 15,000,000 votes to be divided between the two dominant parties. This premises cannot be questioned, for it is based upon facts familiar to every union man. This fully and clearly shows that at the present time the unions cannot become of themselves factors in the political world solely representing the unions as such. The Socialists claim that it is possible to do that which it is shown by figures is impossible. Furthermore, these dreamers assume that it is possible to get the working population into a class conscious party without schooling in the trades union movement. This claim is as absurd as it is grotesque.

The trade union assures the new member that his condition will be immediately benefitted if he joins, and in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred the new member is soon convinced of the correctness of the assertion made. The Socialist has nothing to offer him but theory, and a very hazy one at that. The trade union has been tersely said to relieve the bitter "now and now," while the Socialists are dealing in the "sweet bye and bye."

The plan of the American Federation of Labor was based upon the only tenable idea, that if the trades unions use their power in a negative manner affirmative results will follow. In other words, in using our balance of power we can make and unmake political parties, while we become utterly valueless as a single affirmative political factor. This reasoning does not suit the "soap box" orator, for he assumes that it is men we want to get into office, entirely forgetting that legislative measures are the all-important things to be considered, and it is possible to force recognition of our rights in the negative manner suggested.

As proof of this fact, it is only necessary to point to the unqualified success gained by the trades unionists of Oklahoma and Indian Territory in the framing of the organic law of the new state. No one can deny that the new constitution of this state is far in advance of any state in the union in its provisions affecting the laboring people. The new constitution was framed by a convention overwhelmingly controlled by one political party, and yet the trades unionists had so made their campaign that practically every demand they made was incorporated in the new constitution. And it might be well to here add that Eugene V. Debs and Walter Thomas Mills canvassed the territories in an attempt to defeat the very objects which the trades unionists were fighting for, effectively demonstrating the fact that the Socialists are enemies of the trades union movement.

In the Second Congressional district of Maine, where the A. F. of L. did battle against Congressman Charles E. Littlefield for his bitter antagonism to labor organizations, the Socialists were financed by the Republicans to fight the cause of organized labor. Twenty-five thousand copies of a New York Socialist paper, with a Portland, Me., date, were distributed throughout the Second District of Maine a few days prior to the election. The matter contained in this edition openly assailed the leaders of the movement against Mr. Littlefield, although the gentleman mentioned has a reputation well known to all union men as being violently opposed to everything advocated by organized labor.

In the Twenty-first Congressional district of Illinois the Socialists actively opposed Ben. F. Caldwell, the man who has a clear record as being a staunch friend of organized labor. In the old McKinley district of Ohio the Socialists used their influence to elect Mr. Kennedy, the Republican candidate, and who had shown his hostility to our movement. In fact, in every congressional district where the trades unionists took up a fight against an unfriendly congressman the Socialists were there with their greased hands to forestall, if possible, the defeat of any man who, by his record, had shown he was an enemy of organized labor.

But notwithstanding all the opposition of the Socialists the campaign conducted against our enemies bore fruit. Upon the convening of Congress last December Mr. Littlefield, chairman of the merchant marine and fisheries committee, before which committee was referred the anti-compulsory pilotage bill, which bill the American Federation of Labor had been fighting, succeeded in having it brought from the committee on a favorable report. Debate on the bill was had on the floor of the House for several days, and when it came to a vote Mr. Littlefield, though confident of his ability

to get a favorable vote, was defeated by over sixty votes, thus insuring the complete extinction of the measure. But the most important fact was that all of the congressmen who had been fought for re-election by the American Federation of Labor were recorded as voting against Mr. Littlefield and throwing their votes and influence to the side of organized labor.

The Socialist, of course, can see no progress in this, but to the thinking trades unionists of this country we have an ally that can appreciate the effort made and the good that has already been accomplished by the negative campaign.

ANOTHER FORWARD MOVEMENT.

(By the Rev. Charles Stelzel.)

Even those branches of the Church which have the reputation of being most conservative, are indicating their interest in the labor movement by resolutions, by the appointment of special committees, and by the holding of conferences which have as their object the securing of definite and trustworthy information upon which to base future action.

The latest movement in this direction is that of the United Presbyterian Church, at its convention held last week, when the following resolution was adopted:

"Having faith to believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is designed to meet and solve all the problems of humanity, and remembering that from the very beginning it has been the champion of the man who toils, and must be in the end his salvation, therefore, we, the United Presbyterian Church of North America, in General Assembly met, join in the protest against the un-Christian spirit and methods that so extensively prevail in the industrial world, and pledge our support to the efforts to realize Christ's ideal of fairness, justice and fraternalism between employer and employee."

"We desire the confidence of workingmen everywhere, and deeply deplore any suspicion of unfriendliness. We invite frank counsel as to how, as a Church, we may best minister to workingmen and their cause."

"We urge upon all our ministers a sympathetic study of the problems of labor, and an earnest effort to establish cordial relationship between themselves and the workingmen of their respective communities."

IRON MOLDERS GAIN.

The following is a list of Unions of Iron Molders who gained concessions recently:

Pittsburg—Sixteen hundred granted \$3.50 for a nine-hour day.
Montreal, Canada—About 600 have received a raise in wages—20 cents per day to molders and 30 cents per day for coremakers.
Toronto, Canada—Granted an advance of 15 cents per day, establishing a minimum of \$2.90 for molders and \$2.65 for coremakers for a nine-hour day.

The members of No. 59 and No. 425, St. Louis; No. 182, Belleville, Ill., and No. 412, Granite City, Ill., have been granted an advance of 15 cents per day on the minimum, which establishes a minimum of \$3.15 for floor and \$3.05 for bench and coremakers. About 900 members are affected.

Rochester—Three dollars for a nine-hour day.

Newark, Cal.—Ten per cent on piece prices, making percentage 30 per cent.

Middleton, Conn.—Twenty-five cents per day, making minimum \$3 for molders and \$2.75 for coremakers for nine-hour day.

Marshalltown, Ia.—Twenty-five cents per day, establishing a minimum of \$3.25.

McComb City, Miss.—Three dollars and thirty-three cents for nine hours.

Watertown, N. Y.—Three dollars for nine-hour day.

Zanesville, O.—Nine-hour day.

Cedar Rapids, Ia., has secured an advance in wages.

Bellaire, Ohio—Twenty-five cents making \$3.25 for nine-hour day.

Atchison, Kas.—Three dollars for nine-hour day.

Grand Rapids, Mich.—Coremakers, \$2.50.

Muncie, Ind.—Three dollars for floor, \$2.85 for bench, \$2.75 for coremakers for nine-hour day. Piece workers, 5 per cent advance.

Indianapolis, Ind.—Three dollars and twenty-five cents for floor, \$3.05 for bench, and \$2.75 for coremakers.

Cold Springs, N. Y.—Advance of 25 cents per day.

Grove City, Pa.—Advance of 25 cents per day.

Waterloo, Ia.—Advance of 25 cents per day.

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